

Appich Buildings
408-14 King Street
Alexandria
Virginia

HABS No. VA-677

HABS
VA
7-ALEX,
141-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

APPICH BUILDINGS

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VA
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Location: 408-14 King Street, Alexandria, Virginia

Present Owner: Demolished in 1968 by the Alexandria Redevelopment Housing Authority as part of an urban renewal project in the old commercial center of Alexandria.

Statement of Significance: The four adjoining commercial structures of three stories each tower over the other predominantly Federal buildings lining King Street and testify to the affluence of the Southern town in the immediate post-Civil War years.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1866 (according to the Alexandria Gazette of September 19, 1866)
2. Architect: Unknown
3. Original and subsequent owners: David Appich was the first owner; his heirs were subsequent owners. The Appich heirs held the property at 408 King Street until December 15, 1900.
4. Original plan and construction: In the Alexandria Gazette of September 19, 1866, the featured item in the "100 Years Ago" column referred to these buildings:

The new buildings in the course of erection by... Mr. David Appich, on King, between Royal and Pitt streets, are fast approaching completion, and will, when finished, be very handsome and elegant buildings, and great additions to the appearance of the street on which they are. We learn that they have already been leased, Mr. Appich's by the Messrs. Rosenthal, as a shoe store, and Mr. Simon Waterman as a clothing house; ... It gives us great pleasure to note these improvements in our good old town, and we hope the spirit will not flag, but that an increase of business and consequent prosperity, will warrant a further progress in building, and induce an influx of capital.

In the Alexandria Gazette of Friday, April 13, 1888, the executors of the estate of David Appich, deceased, offered

the properties at 414, 412 and 410 King Street for sale at public auction. Each is described as containing a "three story brick dwelling house and store," although the boundaries of the lots are different: No. 414 fronts 15 feet on King Street and extends south 92 feet 8 inches; the lot of No. 412 is the same in depth, but fronts 18 feet 6 inches on King Street; and No. 410 fronts 16 feet on King Street, with a depth of 72 feet 6 inches. These lot boundaries reflect the continuance of the early subdivisions of the land in this quarter block. It suggests that the early buildings on these lots may have been replaced one by one.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

Mr. Appich further "improved" King Street in 1886 when he put a new facade on the old Mechanics Bank Building on the north side of the 500 block of King Street. This Greek or Roman Revival building had served as the Office of the Provost Marshal when Alexandria was occupied by Federal troops during the Civil War, and was demolished several years ago.

C. Bibliography:

Alexandria Will Book No. 1, Corporation Court, p. 460; Alexandria Deed Books Nos. W-2, p. 50; Y-2, p. 33; S-3, p. 469; and 20, p. 31. Newspaper articles as cited.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

The row of four adjoining commercial facades exhibit architectural detailing unique in Alexandria's downtown. Each building is of a different width and separated from one another by recessed panels. A unity is gained by the consistency in height and by a repetition of the essential design elements.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: Three stories, two bays in each except for 408 King which has three. According to the Alexandria Gazette, 410 measures 16 feet by 72 feet 6 inches, 412 measures 18 feet 6 inches by 92 feet 8 inches, and 414 measures 15 feet by 92 feet 8 inches.
2. Wall construction, finish and color: Brick, common bond, some patching evident.

3. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: Three of the shop fronts have been heavily altered. The shop front at 408 King Street retains its remarkably complex details which include double brackets with drops. The entrance to the first floor shop of 408 is recessed between projecting display windows. To the right is the entrance to the upper floors which has a paneled surround and a heavy modillion cornice supported on decorative brackets.
- b. Windows and shutters: Each building has two bays except for 408 King Street which has three. Arched windows are segmental on the second floor and round-headed on the third. They originally had projecting moulded sills, probably of wood. On 408, the shop front display windows have twisted columns at the corners topped by elaborate double brackets.

4. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Shed with parapet.
- b. Cornice, eaves: An elaborate brick cornice is crowned by a parapet which curves above the two central stores. Elongated modillions extend past the entablature and serve to indicate the separation between the bays and the separation of the buildings from each other.

C. Description of Interior:

Two-room plan.

D. Site:

The buildings face northward along King Street.

Prepared by Mrs. Hugh B. Cox of
The Historic Alexandria
Foundation
June 1968
Edited by
Antoinette J. Lee
November 1975

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken in 1968 to document the commercial and residential buildings in downtown Alexandria which were to be demolished in an urban renewal project. It was cosponsored by the Historic Alexandria Foundation and the Historic American Buildings Survey. Mrs. Hugh B. Cox was the historian and George Eisenman supplied the photographs. The material was edited and updated in 1975 by Antoinette J. Lee, working on contract for HABS.